

WATER BAPTISM
NO BAR TO COMMUNION

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DIFFERENCES IN JUDGMENT

About Water-Baptism, no Bar to Communion :

OR,

TO COMMUNICATE WITH SAINTS, AS SAINTS,

PROVED LAWFUL.

In Answer to a Book written by the Baptists, and published by
Mr. T. P. and Mr. W. K.

ENTITLED,

*“ Some serious Reflections on that part of Mr. BUNYAN’S Confession of
Faith, touching Church-Communion with unbaptized Believers ; ”*

WHEREIN

THEIR OBJECTIONS AND ARGUMENTS ARE ANSWERED,

AND THE DOCTRINE OF COMMUNION

STILL ASSERTED AND VINDICATED.

BY JOHN ✓ BUNYAN.

SLIGHTLY ABRIDGED.

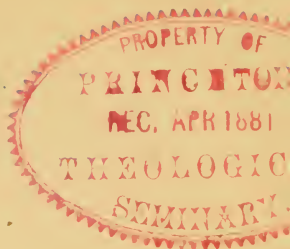
Should not the multitude of words be answered ? And should a man full of talk be justified ? Should thy lies make men hold their peace ? And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee an answer ?—JOB xi. 2, 3.
I am for peace : but when I speak, they are for war.—PSALM cxx. 7.

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TO THE READER.



COURTEOUS READER,

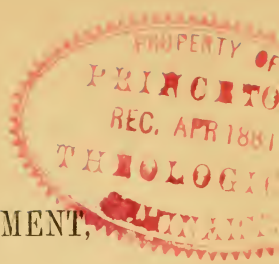
BE entreated to believe me, I had not set pen to paper about this controversy, had we been let alone at quiet in our Christian communion. But being assaulted for more than sixteen years, wherein the brethren of the baptized way, as they had their opportunity, have sought to break us in pieces, merely because we are not, in their way, all baptized first: I could not, I durst not, forbear to do a little, if it might be to settle the brethren, and to arm them against the attempts, which also of late they began to revive upon us. That I deny the ordinance of baptism, or that I have placed one piece of an argument against it, though they feign it, is quite without colour of truth. All I say is, that the church of Christ hath not warrant to keep out of their communion the Christian that is discovered to be a visible saint by the Word, the Christian that walketh according to his light with God. I will not make reflections upon those unhandsome brands that my brethren have laid upon me for this: as that I am a Machiavelian, a man devilish, proud, insolent, presumptuous, and the like: neither will I say, as they, "The Lord rebuke thee;" words fitter to be spoke to the devil than a brother. But reader, read and compare, lay aside prejudice, and judge. What Mr. Kiffin hath done in the matter I forgive, and love him never the worse; but must stand by my principles, because they are peaceable, godly, profitable, and such as tend to the edification of my brother, and, as I believe, will be justified in the day of judgment.

Thine in all Christian service,

According to my light and power,

JOHN BUNYAN





DIFFERENCES IN JUDGMENT,

¶c.

SIR,

YOUR seemingly serious reflections upon that part of my plain-hearted Confession of Faith, which rendereth a reason of my freedom to communicate with those of the saints and faithful who differ from me about water-baptism, I have read and considered, and have weighed them so well as my rank and abilities will admit me to do. But finding yours (if I mistake not) far short of a candid replication, I thought convenient, not only to tell you of those impertinences every where scattered up and down in your book, but also that in my simple opinion, your rigid and church-disquieting principles are not fit for any age and state of the church.

But before I enter the body of your book, give me leave a little to discourse you about your preamble to the same, wherein are two miscarriages unworthy your pretended seriousness, because void of love and humility.

The first is, in that you closely disdain my person, because of my low descent among men, stigmatizing me for a person of that rank that need not to be heeded or attended unto, p. 1.

Ans. What it is that gives a man reverence with you, I know not, but for certain, *he that despiseth the poor,*

reproacheth his Maker ; yet, a poor man is better than a liar. To have gay clothing, or gold rings, or the persons that wear them, in admiration, or to be partial in your judgment or respects, for the sake, or upon the account of flesh and blood, doubtless convicteth you to be of the law a transgressor, and not without partiality, &c. in the midst of your seeming sanctity.

Again, you say, I had not meddled with the controversy at all, had I found any of parts that would divert themselves to take notice of you, p. 2.

Ans. What need you, before you have shewed one syllable of a reasonable argument in opposition to what I assert, thus trample my person, my gifts, and grace, (have I any,) so disdainfully under your feet? What a kind of *you* am *I*? and why is my rank so mean, that the most gracious and godly among you may not duly and soberly consider of what I have said? Was it not the art of the false apostles of old to say thus? To bespatter a man, that his doctrine might be disregarded? *Is not this the carpenter?* and, *His bodily presence is weak and contemptible*, did not use to be in the mouths of the saints; for they knew, *the wind blew where it listed*. Neither is it high birth, worldly breeding, or wealth, but electing love, grace, and the wisdom that comes from heaven, that those who strive for strictness of order in the things and kingdom of Christ, should have in regard and esteem. Need I read you a lecture? *Hath not God chosen the foolish, the weak, the base, yea, and even things that are not, to bring to naught things that are?* Why then do you despise my rank, my state, and quality in the world?

As for my confession of faith, which you also secretly despise, p. 1, if it be good and godly, why may it not be accepted? *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?* If you and the brethren of your way did think it convenient to shew to the world what you held, if perhaps by that means you might escape the prison, why might not I, after above eleven years endurance there, give the world a view of my faith and practice, if peradventure wrong thoughts and false judgments of me might by that means be abated and removed?

But you suggest, I did it because I was so willing to be known in the world by my singular faith and practice.

How singular my faith and practice is, may be better known to you hereafter; but that I did it for a popular applause and fame, as your words seem to bear, (for they proceed from a taunting spirit), that will be known to you better in the day of God, when your evil surmises of your brother, and my designs in writing my book, will be published upon the house-tops.

And even now, before I go any further, I will give you a touch of the reason of my publishing that part thereof which you so hotly oppose.

It was because of those continual assaults that the rigid brethren of your way made, not only upon this congregation to rent it, but also upon many others about us, if peradventure they might break us in pieces, and draw from us disciples after them.

Assaults, I say, upon this congregation by times, for no less than these sixteen or eighteen years: yea, myself they have sent for, and endeavoured to persuade me to

break communion with my brethren ; also with many others they have often tampered, if haply their seeds of division might take. Neither did they altogether fail of their purpose ; for some they did rent and dismember from us : but none but those of whom now they begin to be ashamed ; the judgment of God so following their design, that the persons which then they prevailed upon, are now a stink and reproach to religion. Neither were these spirits content with that discord they did sow among us, but they proceeded to seize upon others. But to pass these, the wild and unsound positions they have urged to maintain their practice, would be too large here to insert.

Now, Sir, to settle the brethren, (the brethren of our community,) and to prevent such disorders among others was the cause of my publishing my papers ; and considering my concern in the house of God, I could do no less than to give them warning, that every man might deliver his soul.

You proceed, saying, “It is my liberty, as well as others into whose hands it falls, to weigh what you have said in truth’s balance ; and if it be found too light, to reject it whether you will or no.”

Ans. Do but grant me, without mocking of me, the liberty you desire to take, and, God helping me, I desire no more to shift for myself among you.

As to your saying, that I proudly and imperiously insult, because I say they are babes, and carnal, that attempt to break the peace and communion of Churches, though upon no better pretences than water ; you must know, I am still of that mind, and shall be, so long as I

see the effects that follow, viz. the breach of love, taking off Christians from the more weighty things of God, and to make them quarrel and have heart-burnings one against another.

Where you are pleased to charge me with raging, for laying those eighteen particular crimes to the charge of such who exclude Christians from church-communion, and debar them their heaven-born privileges for the want of that which yet God never made the wall of division between us, p. 116.

I say, when you can prove that God hath made water-baptism that wall,—and the stress of the after eighteen charges lies wholly and only in that,—then you may time enough call my language such as wanteth charity: but I question though that was granted, whether your saying I rage, will be justified in the day of judgment.

My great noise, as you call it, about an initiating ordinance, you say, you shall take no notice of, p. 3.

Ans. Although you do not, I must. For if baptism be not that, but another; and if visible saints may enter into fellowship by that other, and are nowhere forbidden so to do, because they have no light into water-baptism; it is of weight to be considered by me, yea, and of others too who are unprejudiced.

2. How ignorant you are of such as hold it the initiating ordinance, I know not; nor how long you have been of that persuasion, I know not. This I know, that men of your own party, as serious, godly, and it may be more learned than yourself, have within less than this twelvemonth urged it. Mr. D. in my hearing, did from Rom. vi. 1, 2. in the meeting in Lothbury, affirm it; also

my much esteemed Mr. D. A. did twice in a conference with me assert it.

3. But whatever you say, whether for or against, it is no matter; for while you deny it to be the entering ordinance, you account it the wall, bar, bolt, and door, even that which must separate between the righteous and the righteous; nay, you make want of light therein a ground to exclude the most godly your communion, when every novice in religion shall be received into your bosom, and be of esteem with you, because he hath (and from what ground God knows) submitted to water-baptism.

I am glad, that in p. 4, you conclude with me what is the initiating ordinance; but withal give me leave to correct, as I think, one extravagant expression of yours.

You say, "It is consent on all hands, and nothing else, that makes them members of particular churches; and not faith and baptism," p. 4.

You might have stopped, at, "and nothing else." You need not, in particular, have rejected faith: your first error was bad enough. What! nothing else but consent? What! not so much as a respect to the matter or end? Why then are not all the communities of all the highwaymen in the land truly constituted churches of Christ, unless you can prove that they hold together, but not by consent.

What! consent and nothing else? But why do you throw out faith? Why, I throw out baptism; which because you cannot as to the case in hand fetch in again, therefore out must faith go too. Your action is much like that harlot's that stood to be judged by Solomon, who because her own child was dead would have her

neighbour's killed also. Faith, Sir, both in the profession and confession of it, is of immediate and absolute concern, even in the very act of the church's reception of this or another member. Throw out faith, and there is no such thing as a Christian, neither visible nor invisible. You ought to receive no man, but upon a comfortable satisfaction to the church that you are now receiving a believer. Faith, whether it be savingly there or no, is the great argument with the church in receiving any: we receive not men as men, but the man immediately under that supposition; He hath faith, he is a Christian, Sir, consent simply, without faith, makes no man a member of the church of God; because then would a church not cease to be a church, whoever they received among them: yea, by this assertion you have justified the church of Rome itself to be to this day both good and godly, unless you can prove that they did at first and do now re-receive their unbelieving members without their own consent.

The church hath no such liberty to receive men without respect to faith: yea, faith and holiness must be the essentials, or basis, upon and for the sake of which you receive them: holiness I say, yet not such as is circumstantial, but that which is such in the very heart of it. Pray you in your next, therefore, word it better: lest while you slight and trample upon me, you stand before all blameworthy yourself.

The scriptures you speak of I did not, in my first (p. 68) produce, to shew, persons unbaptized might hold communion with the church, (though I am fully convinced they may,) but to shew, that knowledge of those persons,

of their faith and holiness in general, ought first to be shewed to the church, before she can lawfully receive them. Acts ix. 26, 27. 1 Cor. xvi. 10. 2 Cor. viii. 23.

As to my answer to a question (p. 70) which you have, at p. 5, of yours, corrupted, and then abused, I tell you again, that a discovery of the faith and holiness, and a declaration of the willingness of a person to be subject to the laws and government of Christ in his church, is a ground sufficient to receive such a member.

But you descant, "Is baptism none of the laws of Christ?"

Ans. It is none of those laws, neither any part of them, that the church, as a church, should shew her obedience by. For albeit that baptism be given by Christ our Lord to the church, yet not for them to worship him by as a church. Shew me what church-ordinance it is; and when or where the church, as a church, is to practise it, as one of those laws and appointments that he hath commanded his church to shew to him her obedience by.

Again, that submitting to water-baptism is a sign or note that was ever required by any of the primitive churches of him that would hold fellowship with them, or that it infuseth such grace and holiness into those that submit thereto, as to capacitate them for such a privilege, or that they did acknowledge it a sign thereof, I find not in all the Bible.

I find not, as I told you in my first, that baptism is a sign to any but the person that is baptized. The church hath her satisfaction of the person from better proof. Col. ii. 12. Rom. vi. 1—4. 1 Cor. xv. 29. Acts ii. 38, and xxii. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

I told you also, that baptism makes thee no member of the church, neither doth it make thee a visible saint : it giveth thee, therefore, neither right to nor being of membership at all. Why, Sir, did you not answer these things, but slip them with others, as if you were unconcerned, troubling your reader with such kind of insinuations as must needs be unsavoury to godly ears ?

You tell me, that in p. 93, of mine, I say, "None ever received baptism without light therein."

What if I did ? as I did not ; but you grant it. And now I will ask you, and pray deal fairly in your answer : May a man be a visible saint without light therein ? May he have a good conscience without light therein ? And seeing that baptism is none of the worship that Christ instituted in his church for them to practise as a church, must he be kept dark about all other things concerning the worship of God in his church, until he receive light therein ?

You have answered already, p. 7, *That they ought to be ashamed, and to repent of that abomination, (their sprinkling) before they come to have a sight of the pattern of the house of God, the goings in and the comings out thereof, Ezek. xliii. 10, 11.*

But, Sir, where do you find that want of light in water-baptism, or because a man hath been sprinkled, that he is to be kept dark in all other temple-institutions, till he be ashamed and repent of that ? Pray produce the texts ; for Ezekiel helps you nothing. He speaks only of the pattern of the house, the goings out and comings in thereof. As for the coming in, you have already confessed that baptism is not the entering ordinance. And as for

the worship that Christ hath instituted in his church as a church, I say, and you also have said it, p. 40, baptism is none of the forms thereof, none of the ordinances thereof, none of the laws thereof: for baptism is, as to the practice of it, that which is without the church, without the house of God. Then, by your own text, if a man do repent him of his christening in his childhood, he may be received into fellowship without submitting to baptism. But I will not strain you too far.

You add, "Is it a person's light that giveth being to a precept?"

Ans. Who said it? Yet it is his light and faith about it that can make him to do it acceptably.

You ask again, "Suppose men plead want of light in other commands?"

Ans. If they be not such, the forbearance of which discapacitates him of membership, he may yet be received to fellowship.

"But what if a man want light in the supper?" p. 7.

Ans. There is more to be said in that case than in the other; for that is a part of that worship which Christ hath instituted for his church, to be conversant in as a church; presenting them as such, with their communion with their head, and with one another as members of him. *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.* Wherefore this being a duty incumbent on the church as a church, and on every member of that body as such, they are

obliged in that case more closely to deal with the members, than in that wherein they are not so concerned; and with which as such they have nothing to do. No man baptizeth by virtue of his office in the church; no man is baptized by virtue of his membership there.

“But what if a man want light in his duty to the poor?” p. 8.

Ans. If he doth, God must give it him; I mean to know his duty as a church-member. Now I will add, but what if he that can give a shilling giveth nothing? I suppose all that the church can do in that case is but to warn, to exhort, and charge him, and to shew him his duty; and if he neglect, to shew him, *That he that soweth sparingly, shall not reap plentifully.* 1 Cor. ix. 6. But to cut a man off for this, as you forwardly urge, p. 8, would argue that church (at least I think so) a little too bold with so high and weighty a censure. I plead not here for the churl, but seek to allay your heat: and should it be granted, that such deserve as you would have it, this makes no matter to the case in hand.

Now, whereas you suggest, “That moral evils are but sins against men,” p. 8, you are too much unadvised. The moral evil, as you call it, whether you respect the breach of the first or second table, is first and immediately a sin against God; and more insufferable, yea and damnable, than for a man for want of light to forbear either baptism or the Lord’s supper.

But you say, “We have now found an advocate for sin against God, in the breach of one of his holy commands.”

Ans. As if none of the moral precepts were his.

But, Sir, who have I pleaded for in the denial of any one ordinance of God? yea, or for their neglect of it either? What I say is, that men must have light, that they may not do it in darkness or, papist-like, live by an implicit faith.

But I see you put no difference between an open breach of the law, and a forbearing that which to him is doubtful. But I will suppose a case: There is a man wants light in baptism, yet by his neighbour is pressed to it; he saith he seeth it not to be his duty; the other saith, he sins if he doth it not. Now, seeing whatsoever is not of faith is sin, what should this man do? If you say, "Let him use the means;" I say so too. But what if, when he hath used them he still continueth dark about it, what will you advise him now? If you bid him wait, do you not encourage him to live in sin as much as I do? Nay, and seeing you will not let him for want of light in that, obey God in other his institutions, what is it but to say, "Seeing you live for want of light in the neglect of baptism, we will make you, while you continue so, live, though quite against your light, in the breach of all the rest?" And where you are commanded thus, you may shew the place when you find it.

Now, where you urge, that you are one of them that say, "The epistles were writ to particular churches, and so serve nothing at all for our kind of communion;" urging further, "That it will be difficult for me to prove, that they were also directed to particular saints."

Ans. I wish there were nothing harder that were good for me to do.

But what should be the reason that our author, with

others of his opinion, should stickle so hard to prove all the epistles were wrote to particular churches? Why because those members were, as they think, every one baptized: and so the epistles from which we fetch our arguments for the love and concord of saints, to be only proper to themselves. But if this be true, there is virtue indeed, and more than ever I dreamed of in partaking of water-baptism: for if that shall take away the epistles, and consequently the whole Bible, from all that are not baptized, then are the other churches, and also particular saints, in a very deplorable condition. For he asketh me very devoutly, “Whether any unbaptized persons were concerned in these epistles?” p. 9. But why would they take from us the holy scriptures? Verily, that we might have naught to justify our practice withal: for if the scriptures belong only to baptized believers, they then belong not to the rest; and, in truth, if they could persuade us to yield them this grant, we should but sorrily justify our practice. But I would ask these men, If the word of God came out from them? or if it came to them only? or, whether Christ hath not given his whole word to every one that believeth, whether they be baptized, or in, or out of church-fellowship? John xviii. Or, whether every saint, in some sort, hath not the keys of the kingdom of heaven, which are the scriptures and their power?

Would to God they had learned more modesty, than thus to take from all others, and appropriate to themselves, and that for the sake of their observing a circumstance in religion, so high and glorious a privilege.

But we will come a little to proof. What church will this author find in Rome, that time the epistle was sent

to the brethren there, besides that Church that was in Aquila's house, although many more saints were then in the city? Yea, the apostle, in his salutation at the beginning, embraceth them only as brethren, without the least intimation of their being gathered into fellowship. *To all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, Grace to you, &c.* chap. i. 7. To all there, to all in that city, beloved of God, and that are converted to the Lord Jesus Christ. A church there was in Aquila's house; and that there were many more saints besides, is, and that by the texts, manifest. Besides, considering the rules that are given them in the 14th and 15th chapters, about their receiving one another, doth yet strongly suggest to me, that they were not yet in fellowship, but as it were now about it, when Paul wrote his epistle to them.

The first epistle written to Corinth was also wrote to *all them that in every place called upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Cor. i. 2. But it will be hard work for our author to make it manifest, that none in those days did call on the name of our Lord but those that were first baptized.

The second epistle, also, was not only written to the church at Corinth, but also *to all the saints which were in all Achaia.* To the Galatians and Thessalonians, indeed, his salutation was only to the churches there: but the three epistles before were as well to all other: as also that to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, in which the faithful and saints in Christ Jesus were also every one comprehended. Besides, to what particular church was the epistle to the Hebrews wrote? or the epistle of

James? both those of Peter, and the first of John? Nay, that of John was wrote to some at that time out of fellowship, *that they might have fellowship with the church*; chap. i. 1—4. So that these brethren must not have all the scriptures. We have then a like privilege with all saints, to use the scriptures for our godly edifying, and to defend ourselves thereby from the assaults of those that would make spoil of us. But to pass this, and come to the next:

You object for that I said, “If water-baptism (as the circumstances with which the church was pestered of old) trouble the peace, and wound the consciences of the godly, dismember and break their fellowship; it is although an ordinance, for the present prudently to be shunned.” p. 86.

At this, as I said, you object, p. 10, 11, and say, “Did I ever find baptism a pest or a plague to the churches? and did ever God send an ordinance to be a pest and a plague to his people?”

I answer, I said not that God did send it for any such end at all: God’s ordinances are none of this in themselves; nor if used as, and for the end for which God sent them. But yet both baptism, and the supper of the Lord, have (by being wrested out of their place) been a great affliction to the godly both in this and other ages. What say you to breaking of bread, which the devil, by abusing, made an engine in the hands of papists, to burn, starve, hang, and draw thousands? What say you to John of Leyden? What work did he make by the abuse of the ordinance of water-baptism! And I wish this age had not given cause, through the church-renting spirits

that some are possessed with, to make complaint of this matter, who have also had for their engine the baptism with water. Yea, yourself, Sir, so far as I can perceive, could you get but the opportunity, yourself, I say, under pretence of this innocent ordinance, as you term it, would not stick to make inroads, and outroads too, in all the churches, that suit not your fancy, in the land. For you have already been bold to affirm, "That all those that have been baptized infants ought to be ashamed, and repent, before they be shewed the pattern of the house." And what is this but to threaten, that could you have your will of them, you would quickly take from them their present church-privileges, and let them see nothing thereof, till those qualifications, especially subjection to water-baptism, were found to attend to each of them.

And now, reader, although this author hath thus objected against some passages in this my first argument for communion with persons unbaptized, yet the body of my argument he misseth, and passeth over, as a thing not worth the answering; whether because he forgot, or because he was conscious to himself that he knew not what to do therewith, I will not now determine.

1. I effectually prove, "That baptism is not the initiating ordinance." p. 71, 75.

2. I prove, "That though it was, yet the case may so fall out, that members might be received without it." p. 82, 83.

3. I prove, "That baptism makes no man a visible saint, nor giveth any right to church-fellowship." p. 76.

4. I prove, "That faith, and a life becoming the law

of the ten commandments, should be the chief and most solid argument with the true churches to receive saints to fellowship."

5. I prove, "That circumcision in the flesh, which was the entering ordinance of old, was a type of circumcision in the heart." p. 79, 80.

These things, with others, our author letteth pass, although in the proof of them abideth the strength of this first argument; to which I must entreat him in his next to cast his eye, and give fair answer; as also to the scriptures on which each are built: or he must suffer me to say I am abused. Further, I make a question upon three scriptures: Whether all the saints, even in the primitive times, were baptized with water? To which also he answereth nothing; whereas he ought to have done it, if he will take in hand to confute. The scriptures are, 1 Cor. i. 14—16. Rom. vi. 3. Gal. iii. 27. Yet, were they effectually answered, my argument is nothing weakened.

You come to my second argument, drawn from Eph. iv. 4—6, upon which a little more now to enlarge, and then to take notice of your objection.

The apostle then, in that 4th of the Ephesians, exhorteth the church there, *with all lowliness, and meekness, with long-suffering, and forbearing one another, to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* verses 2, 3. This done, he presents them with such arguments as might fasten his exhortation to purpose upon them.

1. The first is, because the body is one: *There is one body*; therefore they should not divide; for if the church

of Christ be a body, there ought not to be a rent or schism among them.

2. His second argument is, *There is one Spirit*, or one quickening principle, by which the body is made to live. For having asserted before, that Christ hath indeed a body, it was meet that he shewed also that this body hath life and motion. Now that life, being none other than that nourishment, or spirit of life, from which the *whole body fitly joined together, and compact by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working of the measure in every part, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love.* Eph. iv. 16. Now this spirit, being first, and chiefly, in the head, therefore none other but those that hold the head can have this nourishment ministered to them. Besides, this is the spirit that knits the body together, and makes it increase with the increase of God. Col. ii. 16. This is the unity of the Spirit which he before exhorts them to keep.

3. The third argument is, because their hope is also but one: *Even as you are called, saith he, in one hope of your calling.* As who should say, “My brethren, if you are called with one calling; if your hope, both as to the grace of hope, and also the object, be but one; if you hope for one heaven, and for one eternal life; then maintain that unity of the spirit, and hope, while here, in love, and the bond of peace.

4. The fourth argument is, *There is one Lord*, or husband, or prince, to whom this church belongs: therefore if we have husbands but one, lord and prince but one, let us not rent into many parties, as if we had

many husbands, lords, and princes, to govern us, as his wife, his house, and kingdom. Is Christ divided?

5. The fifth argument is, *There is one faith*, by which we all stand justified by one Lord Jesus Christ; one faith by which we escape the wrath of God: one faith by which only they that have it are blessed. Yea, seeing there is but one faith, by which we are all put into one way of salvation, let us hold together as such.

6. The sixth argument, *There is one baptism*. Now we are come to the pinch, viz. Whether it be that of water, or no? which I must positively deny.

1. Because water-baptism hath nothing to do in a church, as a church: it neither bringeth us into the church, nor is any part of our worship when we come there: how then can the peace and unity of the church depend upon water-baptism? Besides, he saith expressly, it is the unity of the spirit, not water, that is here intended; and the arguments brought to enforce it are such as wholly and immediately relate to the duty of the church, as a church.

2. Further, that other text that treateth of our being baptized into a body, saith expressly it is done by the Spirit: *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body*. 1 Cor. xii. 16. Here is the church presented as under the notion of a body; here is a baptism mentioned, by which they are brought or initiated into this body: now that this is the baptism of water, is utterly against the words of the text, *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body*. And, I say, again, the baptism in the sixth argument being urged precisely for no other purpose but with respect to the church's peace as a body

it must needs mean that baptism, by virtue of which they were initiated, and joined together in one ; and that baptism being only that which the Spirit executeth, this therefore is that one baptism.

7. The other argument is also effectual : *There is one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* If we are one body ; if to it there be but one spirit ; if we have but one hope, one faith, and be all baptized by one Spirit into that one body ; and if we have but one Lord, one God, and he in every one of us, let us be also one ; and let them that are thus qualified, both join together, and hold in one.

But you bid me tell you, “what I mean by Spirit-baptism.”

Ans. Sir, you mistake me : I treat not here of our being baptized with the Spirit, with respect to its coming from heaven into us ; but of that act of the Spirit, when come, which baptizeth us into a body, or church. It is one thing to be baptized *with* the Spirit in the first sense, and another to be baptized *by* it in the sense I treat of ; for the Spirit to come upon me, is one thing, and for that when come, to implant, embody, or baptize me into the body of Christ, is another.

Your question therefore is grounded on a mistake, both of my judgment, and the words of the apostle. Wherefore thus I soon put an end to your objections, (p. 14). For the Spirit to come down upon me, is one thing ; and for the Spirit to baptize, or implant me into the church, is another : for to be possessed with the Spirit, is one thing, and to be led by that Spirit is another. I conclude, then, seeing the argument taken from that one

baptism respecteth church-fellowship properly ; and seeing water-baptism meddleth not with it as such, it is the other, even that in 1 Cor. xii. 16. that is here intended, and no other.

But you add, “ If nothing but extraordinary gifts are called the baptism of the Spirit in a strict sense, then that baptism, 1 Cor. xii., must be water-baptism, as well as that in the Ephesians.”

Hold : you make your conclusions before you have cause. First, prove that in the Ephesians to be meant of water-baptism, and that the baptism in 1 Cor. xii. 16. is the baptism you would have it, and then conclude my argument void.

That it is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, according to the common notion, I say not ; for you to assert it is the baptism of water, gives the lie to the text ; but that it is an act of the Holy Ghost, baptizing the saints into a body or church, you will hardly be able to make the contrary appear to be truth.

But behold, while here you would have this to be baptism with water, how you contradict and condemn your own notion ? You say water-baptism is not the *entering* ordinance ; yet the baptism here is such as baptizeth us *into* a body : wherefore before you say next time that this in 1 Cor. xii. 13, is meant of water-baptism, affirm that water-baptism is the *initiating* or *entering* ordinance, that your opinion and doctrine may hang better together.

We come to my third argument ; which is “ to prove, it is lawful to hold church-communion with the godly, sincere believer, though he hath not been baptized with

water, because he hath the doctrine of baptisms. Heb. vi.” Which doctrine I distinguish from the practice of it: the doctrine being that which by the outward sign is presented to us, or which by the outward circumstance of the act is preached to the believer, viz. The death of Christ, my death with Christ; also his resurrection from the dead, and mine with him to newness of life. This our author calleth, “one of the strangest paradoxes that he hath lightly observed.”

Ans. How light he is in his observation of things, I know not; this I am sure, the apostle makes mention of the *doctrine* of baptism; now that the *doctrine* of a man, or ordinance, is the signification of what is preached, is apparent to very sense. What is Christ’s doctrine, Paul’s doctrine, scripture-doctrine, but the truth couched under the words that are spoken? So the doctrine of baptism, yea, and the doctrine of the Lord’s supper, are those truths or mysteries that such ordinances preach unto us. And that the doctrine of baptism in this sense, is the great end for which that and the Lord’s supper were instituted, is apparent from all the scriptures. It is that which the apostle seeketh for in that eminent 6th of the Romans: *Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection.* Rom. vi. 3—5. What is here discoursed but the doctrine of, or that which baptism teacheth; with an intimation,

that that was the chief, for the sake of which that shadow was instituted ; as also that they that have the doctrine, or that which is signified thereby, they only must reign with Christ ?

Again, This is that which he seeketh for among the Corinthians, *If the dead rise not at all*, saith he, *why then were you baptized for the dead ?* 1 Cor. xv. 29. Why then were you baptized ? what did baptism teach you ? what doctrine did it preach to you ? Further, *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen again with him through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead.* What is here in chief asserted, but the doctrine only which water-baptism preacheth ? with an intimation, that they, and they only, are the saved of the Lord, that have heard, received, and that live in this doctrine. Col. ii. 12, 13.

But you add, “ Under the law, all the sacrifices of that dispensation, with their sabbaths, were types of that Christ who was the substance of all those ceremonies. If any of them, then, that professed faith in the Messias to come, should upon scruples, or want of pretended light, neglect the whole, or part of that typical worship ; why may not a man say of them, as this advocate of the practice under debate, They had the richer and better sacrifice ?

Ans. First, that the brethren which refuse to be baptized, as you and I would have them, refuse it for want of pretended light, becomes you not to imagine, unless your boldness will lead you to judge, that all men want sincerity that come not up to our judgment. Their conscience may be better than either yours or mine ; yet

God, for purposes best known to himself, may forbear to give them conviction of their duty in this particular. But what, because they are not baptized, have they not Jesus Christ? or must we not be afraid to say, Christ is better than water-baptism? Yea, God himself, for the sake of this better thing, hath suffered in his church a suspension of some of his ordinances, yet owned them for his truly-constituted congregation. What say you to the church in the wilderness? I touched you with it in my first; but perceive you listed not to meddle therewith. That church received members the way which was not prescribed by, but directly against the revealed mind of God; yet stood a true church, their members, true members; also that church, in that state, was such before whom, among whom, and to whom, God continually made known himself to be their God, and owned them for his peculiar treasure.

And now I am fallen upon it, let me a little enlarge. This church, according to the then instituted worship of God, had circumcision for their entering ordinance, Gen. xvii. 13, 14; without which it was unlawful to receive any into fellowship with them: yea, he that without it was received, was to be cut off, and cast out again. Further, as to the passover, the uncircumcised was utterly forbidden to eat it. Exod. xii. Now, if our brethren had as express prohibition to justify their groundless opinion, as here is to exclude the uncircumcised from the communion of the church and the passover? I say, if they could find it written, "No unbaptized person shall enter, no unbaptized person shall eat of the supper," what a noise would they make about it? But yet let the

reader observe, that although circumcision was the entering ordinance, and our author saith baptism is not ; yea, though this church was expressly forbidden to receive the uncircumcised, (and we have not a syllable now to forbid the unbaptized) yet this church received members without, and otherwise than by this entering ordinance. They also admitted them to the Passover ; yea, entertained, retained, and held communion with them, so long as forty years without it. I say again, that the number of this sort of communicants was not so few as six hundred thousand. Moreover, to these uncircumcised was the land of Canaan given, yea, a possession of part thereof, before they were circumcised ; but the old circumcised ones might not enter therein. I am the larger in this, because our author hath overlooked my first mention thereof. And now I ask, What was the reason that God continued his presence with this church, notwithstanding this transgression ? Was it not because they had that richer and better thing, the Lord Jesus Christ ? *For they did all eat of that spiritual bread, and drank of that spiritual rock which followed them ; and that rock was Christ.* 1 Cor. x. I confess I find them under rebukes and judgments in the wilderness ; and that they were many times threatened to be destroyed : but yet I find not so much as one check for their receiving of members uncircumcised. Further, in the New Testament, where we have a catalogue of their sins, and also of their punishment for them, we find not a word about circumcision, nor the smallest intimation of the least rebuke for neglecting the entering ordinance. 1 Cor. x. 5, 10. I will therefore say to them, as I have also said of my brethren, “They had the richer and better thing.”

But you object, "This putteth the whole of God's instituted worship, both under the law and gospel, to the highest uncertainties." p. 17.

Ans. This putteth our opposers out of their road, and quencheth the flame of their unwarrantable zeal. For if the entering ordinance, if the ordinance without which no man might be added to the church, was laid aside for forty years; yea, if more than six hundred thousand did communicate with them without it; I say again, if they did it, and held communion with God, that notwithstanding; yea, and had not, that we read of, all that time one small check for so doing; why may not we now enter communion, hold communion, maintain communion, church-communion, without being judged and condemned by you; because we cannot for want of light, be all baptized before; especially considering baptism makes no man a saint, is not the entering ordinance, is no part of the worship of God enjoined the church as a church? To conclude, although we receive members unbaptized, we leave not God's instituted worship at uncertainties, especially what he hath commanded us as his church: we only profess our want of light in some things; but see no word to warrant the forbearance of our duty in all, for want of persuasion in one.

You object, "I call baptism a circumstance, an outward shew, I nick-name it."

Ans. Deep reproof! But why did you not shew me my evil in thus calling it, when opposed to the substance and the thing signified? Is it the substance? Is it the thing signified? And why may not I give it the name of a shew, when you call it a symbol, and compare it to a gentleman's livery? p. 52.

But you say, I call it an outward shew.

Ans. Is it an inward one? What is it?

“It is a command.”

Ans. But doth that instal it in that place and dignity that was never intended for it?

You object further, “They cannot have the doctrine of baptism that understand not our way of administering it.” p. 18.

This is your mistake, both of the doctrine and thing itself. But if you will not scorn to take notice of me, *I advise you again to consider, that a man may find baptism to be commanded, may be informed who ought to administer it, may also know the proper subject, and that the manner of baptizing is dipping, and may desire to practise it because it is commanded; and yet know nothing of what water-baptism preacheth, or of the mystery baptism sheweth to faith.*

But say you, “Who taught you to divide betwixt Christ and his precepts, that you word it at such a rate?” That he that hath the one, &c.

Ans. To say nothing of faith, and the word, verily reason itself teacheth it. For if Christ be my righteousness, and not water; if Christ be my advocate, and not water; if there be that good and blessedness in Christ that is not in water; then is Jesus Christ better than water, and also in these to be eternally divided from water, unless we will make them co-saviours, co-advocates, and such as are equally good and profitable to men.

But say you, “I thought that he that hath Christ had an orderly right to all Christ’s promises and precepts, and that the precepts of Christ are part of the riches that a believer hath in and by Christ.”

Ans. A believer hath more in Christ than either promise or precept ; but all believers know not all things that of God are given to them by Christ. But must they not use and enjoy that which they know, because they know not all ? or must they neglect the weightier matters, because they want mint, anise, and cummin ? Your pretended orderly right is your fancy : there is not a syllable in the whole Bible that bids a Christian to forbear his duty in other things, because he wanteth, as you term it, the symbol, or water-baptism.

But say you, “ He that despiseth his birthright of ordinances, or church-privileges, will be found to be a profane person, as Esau, in God’s account.”

Baptism is not the privilege of a church as such. But what ? Are they all Esaus indeed ? Must we go to hell, and be damned, for want of faith in water-baptism ? And take notice, I do not plead for a despising of baptism, but a bearing with our brother that cannot do it for want of light. The best of baptism he hath, viz. the signification thereof : he wanteth only the outward shew ; which, if he had, would not prove him a truly visible saint ; it would not tell me he had the grace of God in his heart : it is no characteristical note to another of my sonship with God.

But why did you not answer these parts of my argument ? Why did you only cavil at words ? which if they had been left out, the argument yet stands good. “ He that is not baptized, if yet a true believer, hath the doctrine of baptism ; yea, he ought to have it before he be convicted it is his duty to be baptized, or else he playeth the hypocrite. There is therefore no difference

between that believer that is, and he that is not yet baptized with water, but only his going down into the water, there to perform an outward ceremony of the substance which he hath already ; which yet he is not commanded to do with respect to membership with the church, but to obtain by that further understanding of his privilege by Christ, which before he made profession of, and that as a visible believer."

But to come to my fourth argument, which you so tenderly touch as if it burnt your fingers : " I am bold, say I, to have communion with visible saints as before, because God hath communion with them, whose example in the case we are strictly commanded to follow : " *Receive ye one another, as Christ Jesus hath received you to the glory of God.* Yea, though they be saints in opinion contrary to you or me. *We that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves :* infirmities that are sinful ; for they that are natural are incident to all. Infirmities therefore they are, that for want of light cause a man to err in circumstantialia. And the reason upon which Paul groundeth this admonition is, *For Christ pleased not himself : but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.*

You say to this : (p. 20,) " That it is Paul's direction to the church at Rome, how to receive their brethren church-members."

I answer,

1. What, are not the poor saints now in this city, are not they concerned in these instructions ? Or is not the church, by these words, at all directed how to carry it to

those that were not yet in fellowship? A bold assertion ! but grounded upon nothing but that you would have it so.

2. But how will you prove that there was a church, a right constituted church at Rome, besides that in Aquila's house? chap. xvi. Neither doth this epistle, nor any other in the whole book of God, affirm it. Besides, since Paul, in this last chapter, saluteth the church in this man's house, but the other only as particular saints, it giveth farther ground of conviction to you, that those others were not as yet embodied in such a fellowship.

3. But suppose there was another church besides, it doth not therefore follow, that the apostle exhorteth them only to receive persons already in fellowship, but him, even every him, that there was weak in faith, but not to doubtful disputations.

4. Suppose, again, the receiving here exhorted to be such as you would have it, yet the rule by which they are directed to do it, is that by which we perceive that Christ hath received them : but Christ did not receive them by baptism, but as given to him by the Father. Him therefore concerning whom we are convinced, that he by the Father is given to Christ, him should we receive.

5. But what need I grant you that which cannot be proved? Yet if you could prove it, it availeth nothing at all ; because you may not, cannot, ought not, to dare to limit the exhortation to receiving of one another into each others affections only, and not also receiving saints into communion.

But you object, "To make God's receiving the rule of our receiving, in all cases will not hold, p. 21."

Ans. Keep to the thing, man : if it hold in the case

in hand, it is enough; the which you have not denied. And that it holds thus, is plain, because commanded. But let the reader know, that your putting in that way of his receiving which is invisible to us, is but an unhandsome straddling over my argument, which treateth only of a visible receiving, such as is manifest to the church. This you knew, but sought, by evading, to turn the reader from considering the strength of this my argument. "The receiving then," said I, p. 29, "because it is set as an example to the church, is such as must needs be visible unto them, and is best discovered by that word that describeth the visible saint. Whoso then you can judge a visible saint, one that walketh with God, you may, nay ought to judge by the same word, God hath received him. Now, him that God receiveth, him should you receive." But will any object, they cannot believe that God receiveth the unbaptized saints? I will not suppose you so much stupified, and therefore shall make no answer. But you seem to be much offended because I said, "Vain man! think not by the straitness of thine order in outward and bodily conformity to outward and shadowish circumstances, that thy peace is maintained with God."

But why so much offended at this?

"Because you intend by this the brethren of the baptized way?"

Ans. If they be vain men, and set up their own order, how strait soever they make it, they are worthy to be reproved. "If they have rejected the word of the Lord, what wisdom is in them?" And as you suggest the first, I affirm the second. But if you would be justified

in excluding those with whom yet you see God hath communion, because they yet see not a shadow with you, produce the scripture for such order, that we may believe it is the order of God : but deal fairly, lest we shew your nakedness, and others see your shame.

You tell me of the order of the Colossians, chap. ii. 5. But if you can prove that that church refused to hold communion with that saint whom they knew to be received by Christ, and held communion with him ; or that none but those that are baptized, are received by, and hold communion with him ; then you justify your order. In the mean while, the whole of my argument stands firm against you : “ You must have communion with visible saints, because God hath communion with them, whose example in the case we are strictly commanded to follow.”

As to the peace you make an objection about, p. 23, you have granted me what I intended : and now I add further, that for church-peace to be founded in baptism, or any other external rite, not having to do with the church as a church, is pure peace indeed. Church-peace is founded in blood, and love to each other for Jesus’s sake ; bearing with, and forbearing one another, in all things circumstantial, that concern not church-worship as such. And in my other I have proved that baptism is not such, and therefore ought not to be urged, to make rents and divisions among brethren.

My fifth argument is, “ That a failure in such a circumstance as water-baptism, doth not unchristian us : ” This you are compelled to grant, p. 25. And I conclude with your words, persons ought to be Christians, before

visible Christians, such as any congregation in the land may receive to communion with themselves, because God hath shewed us that he has received them: *Receive him to the glory of God.* *To the glory of God* is put in on purpose, to shew what dishonour they bring to him, who despise to have communion with such whom they know do maintain communion with God. I say again, How doth this man, or that church, glorify God, or count the wisdom and holiness of heaven beyond them, when they refuse communion with them, concerning whom yet they are convinced that they have communion with God?

But my argument you have not denied, nor meddled with the conclusion at all; which is, “That therefore, even because a failure here doth not unchristian us, doth not make us insincere, and I add, doth not lay us open to any revealed judgment or displeasure of God, (if it doth shew where); therefore it should not, it ought not to make us obnoxious to the displeasure of the church of God.”

But you say, “I rank gospel-precepts with Old-Testament abrogated ceremonies,” p. 25.

Ans. You should have given your reader my words, that he might have judged from my own mouth. I said then, (speaking before of Christianity itself, p. 94,) “That thousands of thousands that could not consent to water, as we, are now with the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.” What was said of eating, or the contrary, may as to this be said of water-baptism: Neither if I be baptized am I the better, neither if I be not am I the worse; not the better, before God, not the worse before men: still meaning

as Paul, provided I walk according to my light with God. Otherwise it is false : for if a man that seeth it to be his duty, shall despisingly neglect it, or if he that hath not faith about it shall foolishly take it up, both these are for this the worse ; I mean as to their own sense, being convicted in themselves as transgressors. He therefore that doeth according to this light, doth well ; and he that doeth it not, for want of light, doth not ill : for he approveth his heart to be sincere with God, even by that his forbearance. And I tell you again, it is nowhere recorded, that this man is under any revealed threatening of God, for his not being baptized with water, he not having light therein, but is admitted through his grace to as many promises as you. If therefore he be not a partaker of that circumstance, yet he is of that liberty and mercy by which you stand with God.

But that I practise instituted worship upon the same account as Paul did circumcision, and shaving, is too bold for you to presume to imagine. What ! because I will not suffer water to carry away the epistles from the Christians ; and because I will not let water-baptism be the rule, the door, the bolt, the bar, the wall of division between the righteous and the righteous ; must I therefore be judged to be a man without conscience to the worship of Jesus Christ ? the Lord deliver me from superstitious and idolatrous thoughts about any of the ordinances of Christ and of God. But my fifth argument standeth against you untouched ; you have not denied, much less confuted, the least syllable thereof.

You tell me my sixth argument is, “ Edification.”

Ans. If it be, why is it not embraced ? But my own

words are these : “ I am for holding communion thus, because the edification of souls in the faith and holiness of the gospel, is of greater concern than an agreement in outward things ; I say, it is of greater concern with us, and of far more profit to our brother, than our agreeing in, or contesting for water-baptism ; John xvi. 13 ; 1 Cor. xiv. 12 ; 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. Chap. viii. 1.” Now, why did you not take this argument in pieces, and answer those scriptures, on which the strength thereof depends ? But if to contest, and fall out about water-baptism, be better than to edify the house of God, produce the texts that we may be informed.

You say, “ Edification is the end of all communion, but all things must be done in order, orderly ; ” p. 26.

Ans. When you have proved that there is no such thing as an orderly edifying of the church, without water-baptism precede, then it will be time enough to think you have said something.

You add, “ Edification as to church-fellowship being a building up, doth suppose the being of a church ; but pray you shew us a church without baptism ; ” p. 26.

Ans. See here the spirit of these men, who, for the want of water-baptism, have at once unchurched all such congregations of God in the world. But against this I have, and do urge, That water-baptism giveth neither being nor well-being to a church ; neither is any part of that instituted worship of God, that the church, as such, should be found in the practice of. Therefore her edification as a church may, yea, ought to be attained unto, without it.

But you say, “Shew us a New-Testament church without baptism.” p. 26.

Ans. What say you to the church all along the Revelation, quite through the reign of antichrist? Was that a New-Testament church or no?

But you find fault because I said, “Edification is greater than contesting about water-baptism.” p. 27.

Ans. If it be not, confute me; if it be, forbear to cavil. Water-baptism, and all God’s ordinances, are to be used to edification, not to beget heats and contentions among the godly, wherefore edification is best.

Object. I had thought that the preaching and opening baptism, might have been reckoned a part of our edification.

Ans. The act of water-baptism hath not place in church-worship, neither in whole, nor in part; wherefore, pressing it upon the church, is to no purpose at all.

Object. “Why may you not as well say, that edification is greater than breaking of bread?” p. 27.

Ans. So it is; else that should never have been instituted to edify withal. That which serveth is not greater than he that is served thereby. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper both were made for us, not we for them; wherefore both were made for our edification, but no one for our destruction.

But, again, the Lord’s-supper, not baptism, is for the church, as a church; therefore, as we will maintain the church’s edifying, that must be maintained in it; yea, used oft to shew the Lord’s death till he come. 1 Cor. xi. 22—26.

Besides, because it is a great part of church-worship,

as such, therefore it is pronounced blessed ; the Lord did openly bless it before he gave it ; yea, and we ought to bless it also ; *The cup of blessing which we bless*. Not to say more, therefore, your reasoning from one to the other will not hold.

Object. “ How comes contesting for water-baptism to be so much against you ? ”

Ans. First. Because weak brethren cannot bear it ; whom yet we are commanded to receive, but not to doubtful disputation ; doubtful to them ; therefore for their sakes, I must forbear it. Rom. xiv. 1.

Secondly, Because I have not seen any good effect ; but the contrary wherever such hot spirits have gone before me : *For where envy and strife is there is confusion, (or tumults) and every evil work*. James iii. 16, 17.

Thirdly, Because by the example of the Lord, and Paul, we must consider the present state of the church, and not trouble them with what they cannot bear, John xvi. 13. 1 Cor. iii. 1—3.

I conclude, then, Edification in the church is to be preferred above what the church, as a church, hath nothing to do withal. All things, dearly beloved, are for our edifying. 1 Cor. xiv. 5 ; xii. 26. 2 Cor. xii. 19. Eph. iv. 26. Rom. xv. 2. 1 Cor. xiv. 3. 2 Cor. x. 8 ; xiii. 10. Rom. xiv. 19.

Before I wind up this argument, I present you with several instances, shewing, that the breach of some of God’s precepts have been borne with, when they came in competition with edification. As, first, that of Aaron, who let the offering for sin be burnt, that should indeed

have been eaten ; Lev. x. ; yet, because he could not do it to his edification, Moses was content. But the law was thereby transgressed : Lev. vi. 26. *The priest that offereth it for sin, shall eat it.*

To this you reply, “That was not a constant continued forbearing of God’s worship, but a suspending of it for a season.”

Ans. We also suspend it but for a season : when persons can be baptized to their edification, they have the liberty.

But, secondly, This was not a bare suspension, but a flat transgression of the law. *Ye should indeed have eaten it.* Yet Moses was content ; Lev. x. 16—20.

But say you, “Perhaps it was suspended upon just and legal grounds, though not expressed.”

Ans. The express rule was against it : *Ye should indeed, saith Moses, have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded ;* Lev. x. 18. But, good Sir, are you now for unwritten verities ? for legal grounds, though not expressed ? I will not drive you further ; here is room enough.

As for Eldad and Medad, it cannot be denied, but that their edifying of the people was preferred before their conforming to every circumstance ; Num. xi. 16—26.

You add, “That Paul, for a seeming low thing, did withstand Peter.”

Sir, If you make but a seeming low thing of dissembling, and teaching others so to do, especially where the doctrine of justification is endangered, I cannot expect much good conscience from you.

We come now to my seventh argument, for communion

with the godly, though unbaptized persons ; which you say is love, p. 29.

My argument is this ; “Therefore I am for communion thus ; because love, which above all things we are commanded to put on, is of much more worth than to break about baptism.” And let the reader note, that of this argument you deny not so much as one syllable, but run to another story ; but I will follow you.

I add further, That love is more discovered when we receive for the sake of Christ, than when we refuse his children for want of water : and tell you again, that this exhortation to love is grounded not upon baptism, but the putting on of the new creature, which hath swallowed up all distinctions. Col. iii. 9—14. Yea, there are ten arguments in this one, which you have not so much as touched : but thus object, “That man that makes affection the rule of his walking, rather than judgment, it is no wonder if he go out of the way.”

Ans. Love to them we are persuaded that God hath received, is love that is guided by judgment ; and to receive them that are such, because God hath bidden us, (Rom. xiv.) is judgment guided by rule. My argument therefore hath forestalled all your noise, and standeth still on its legs against you.

But you object, “Must our love to the unbaptized indulge them in an act of disobedience ? Cannot we love their persons, parts, graces, but we must love their sins ?” p. 30.

Ans. We plead not for indulging. *But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God ?* 2 Chron. xxviii. 10. But why can you indulge the

Baptists in any acts of disobedience? for to come unprepared into the church, is an act of disobedience; to come unprepared to the supper is an act of disobedience; and to come so also to other solemn appointments, are acts of disobedience.

“But for these things,” you say, “you do not cast, nor keep any out of the church.”

Ans. But what acts of disobedience do we indulge them in?

“In the sin of infant-baptism.”

Ans. We indulge them not; but being commanded to bear with the infirmities of each other, suffer it; it being indeed in our eyes such: but in theirs they say a duty, till God shall otherwise persuade them. If you be without infirmity, do you first throw a stone at them: they keep their faith in that to themselves, and trouble not their brethren therewith: we believe that God hath received them; they do not want to us a proof of their sonship with God; neither hath he made water a wall of division between us, and therefore do we receive them.

Object. “I take it to be the highest act of friendship to be faithful to these professors, and to tell them they want this one thing in gospel-order, which ought not to be left undone.” p. 30.

Ans. If it be the highest piece of friendship to preach water-baptism to unbaptized believers, the lowest act thereof must needs be very low. But contrary-wise, I count it so far off from being any act of friendship, to press baptism in our notion on those that cannot bear it; that it is a great abuse of the peace of my brother, the law of love, the law of Christ, or the society of the

faithful. Love suffereth long, and is kind, is not easily provoked ; let us therefore follow after things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another : let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification : bear you one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. 1 Cor. xiii. Rom. xiv. 19, and xv. 2. Gal. vi. 2.

But say you, " I doubt when this comes to be weighed in God's balance, it will be found no less than flattery, for which you will be reprov'd." p. 31.

Ans. It seems you do but doubt it, wherefore the principles from which you doubt it, of that methinks you should not be certain ; but this is of little weight to me ; for he that will presume to appropriate the epistles to himself and fellows for the sake of baptism, and that will condemn all the churches of Christ in the land for want of baptism, and that will account his brother as profane Esau, (p. 20.) and rejected, as idolatrous Ephraim, (p. 32.) because he wanteth his way of water-baptism ; he acts out of his wonted way of rigidness, when he doth but doubt, and not affirm his brother to be a flatterer. I leave therefore this your doubt to be resolved at the day of judgment, and in the meantime trample upon your harsh and unchristian surmises.

My argument treateth of church-communion ; in the prosecution of which I prove,

1. That love is grounded upon the new creature, Col. iii. 9, &c.

2. Upon our fellowship with the Father and Son. 1 John i. 2, 3.

3. That with respect to this, it is the fulfilling of the royal law, James iv. 11. Rom. xiv. 21.

4. That it shews itself in acts of forbearing, rather than in publishing some truths ; communicating only what is profitable, forbearing to publish what cannot be borne. 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. Acts xx. 18—20. John xvi. 17.

5. I shew further, That to have fellowship for, to make that the ground of, or to receive one another chiefly upon the account of an outward circumstance ; to make baptism the including and excluding charter ; the bounds, bar, and rule of communion, when by the word of the everlasting Testament, there is no word for it ; (to speak charitably,) if it be not for want of love, it is for want of light in the mysteries of the kingdom of Christ. Strange ! Take two Christians equal in all points but this ; nay, let one go beyond the other in grace and goodness, as far as a man is beyond a babe, yet water shall turn the scale, shall open the door of communion to the less, and command the other to stand back ; yet is no proof to the church of this babe's faith and hope ; hath nothing to do with his entering into fellowship ; is no part of the worship of the church. These things should have been answered, seeing you will take upon you so roundly to condemn our practice.

You come now to my eighth argument, which you do not only render falsely, but by so doing abuse your reader. I said not that the Church at Corinth did shut each other out of communion, but, for God's people to divide into parties, or to shut each other from church-communion, though for greater points, and upon higher pretences, than that of water-baptism, hath heretofore been counted carnal, and the actors therein babish Christians : and then bring in the factions that were in the church at Corinth.

But what ? may not the evil of denying church-communion now, if proved naught by a less crime in the church at Corinth, be counted carnal and babish, but the breach of communion must be charged upon them at Corinth also ?

That my argument is good you grant, p. 32, saying, "The divisions of the church at Corinth were about the highest fundamental principles, for which they are often called carnal ;" yet you cavil at it. But if they were to be blamed for dividing, though for the highest points ; are not you much more for condemning your brethren to perpetual banishment from church-communion, though sound in all the great points of the gospel, and right in all church-ordinances also, because for want of light they fail only in the point of baptism ?

As to your quibble about Paul and Apollos, whether they, or others, were the persons, (though I am satisfied you are out,) yet it weakeneth not my argument ; for if they were blameworthy for dividing, though about the highest fundamental principles (as you say), how ought you to blush for carrying it as you do to persons, perhaps more godly than yourselves, because they judge not with you in a circumstance ?

That the divisions at Corinth were helped on by the abuse of baptism, to me is evident, from Paul's so oft suggesting it : *Were you baptized in the name of Paul ? I thank God I baptized none of you, lest any should say, I had baptized in my own name.*

I do not say, that they who baptized them designed this, or that baptism in itself effected it ; nor yet (though our author feigns it,) "that they were most of them baptized by their factious leaders." p. 55. But that they

had their factious leaders, is evident; and that these leaders made use of the names of Paul, Apollos, and Christ, is as evident; for by these names they were beguiled by the help of abused baptism.

But say you, “Wherein lies the force of this man’s argument against baptism as to its place, worth, and continuance?”

I answer, I have no argument as to its place, worth, or continuance, although you seek thus to scandalize me. But this kind of sincerity of yours, will never make me one of your disciples.

Have not I told you even in this argument, “That I speak not as I do to persuade or teach men to break the least of God’s commandments; but that my brethren of the baptized way may not hold too much thereupon, may not make it an essential of the gospel, nor yet of the communion of saints.” Yet he feigns that I urge two arguments against it, p. 36, and 38. But, reader, thou mayest know I have no such reason in my book. Besides, I should be a fool indeed, were I against it, should I make use of such weak arguments. My words then are these :

I thank God, saith Paul, that I baptized none of you but Crispus, &c. Not but that then it was an ordinance, but they abused it in making parties thereby, as they abused also Paul and Cephas. Besides, said he, *I know not whether I baptized any other.* By this negligent relating who were baptized by him, he sheweth that he made no such matter thereof, as some in these days do. Nay, that he made no matter at all thereof with respect to a church-communion. For if he did not heed who

himself had baptized, much less did he heed who were baptized by others. But if baptism had been the initiating ordinance, (and I now add) essential to church-communion ; then no doubt he had made more conscience of it, than thus lightly to pass it by."

I know your reply, " New-Testament saints are all baptized first."

Ans. Suppose it granted ; Were they baptized, that thereby they might be qualified for their right to communion of saints, so that without their submitting to water, they were to be denied the other ? Further, suppose I should grant this groundless notion, Were not the Jews in Old-Testament times to enter the church by circumcision ? For that,—though water is not,—was the very entering-ordinance. Besides, as I said before, there was a full forbidding of all that were not circumcised from entering into fellowship, with a threatening to cut them off from the church if they entered in without it : Yet more than six hundred thousand entered that church without it. But how now, if such an one as you had then stood up and objected, Sir Moses, What is the reason that you transgress the order of God, to receive members without circumcision ? Is not that the very entering-ordinance ? Are not you commanded to keep out of the church all that are not circumcised ? Yea, and for all those that you thus receive, are you not commanded to cast them out again, *to cut them off from among this people ?* Gen. xvii. 13, 14. Exod. xii. 24—26.

I say, Would not this man have had a far better argument to have resisted Moses, than you in your wordless notion have to shut out men from the church,

more holy than many of ourselves? But do you think that Moses and Joshua, and all the elders of Israel, would have thanked this fellow, or have concluded that he spake on God's behalf? Or, that they should then, for the sake of a better than what you call order, have set to the work that you would be doing, even to break the church in pieces for this?

But, say you, "If any will find or force another way into the sheepfold, than by the footsteps of the flock, we have no such custom, nor the churches of God," p. 41.

Ans. What was done of old, I have shewed you, that Christ, not baptism, "is the way to the sheepfold," is apparent: And that the person, in mine argument, is entitled to all these, *viz.* Christ, grace, and all the things of the kingdom of Christ in the church, upon the scriptures urged, is evident.

But you add, "That according to mine old confidence, I affirm, *That drink ye all of this*, is entailed to faith, not baptism: A thing, say you, soon said, but yet never proved."

Ans. That it is entailed to faith, must be confessed of all hands. 2. That it is the privilege of him *that discerneth the Lord's body* and that no man is to deny him it, is also by the text as evident, (and so let him eat) because he is worthy. Wherefore he, and he only *that discerneth the Lord's body*, he is the worthy receiver, in God's estimation; but that none *discerneth the Lord's body* but the baptized, is both fond and ridiculous once to surmise.

Wherefore to exclude Christians, and to debar them their heaven-born privileges, for want of that which yet

God never made a wall of division betwixt us : this looks too like a spirit of persecution, (Job xix. 25—28, &c.) and carrieth in it those eighteen absurdities which you have so hotly cried out against. And I do still add, “Is it not that which greatly prevaieth with God to bring down those judgments, which at present we (the people of God) groan under ; I will dare to say it was a cause thereof :” Yea, I will yet proceed ; I fear, I strongly fear, that the rod of God is not yet to be taken from us : for what more provoking sin among Christians, than to deny one another their rights and privileges to which they are born of God ? And then to father these their doings upon God, when yet he hath not commanded it, neither in the New Testament nor the Old.

But I may not lightly pass this by, for because I have gathered eighteen absurdities from this abuse of God’s ordinances, or from the sin of binding the brethren to observe order, not founded on the command of God ; (and I am sure you have none to shut out men as good, as holy, and as sound in faith as ourselves, from communion ;) therefore you call my conclusion *devilish*, (p. 43.) *Topfull of ignorance, and prejudice*, (p. 41,) *and me, one of Machiavel’s scholars*, (p. 42.) *also proud, presumptuous, impeaching the judgment of God*.

Ans. But what is there in my proposition, that men, considerate, can be offended at ? These are my words ; “But to exclude Christians from church-communion, and to debar them their heaven-born privileges, for the want of that which yet God never made a wall of division between us : this looks too like a spirit of persecution : this respecteth more the form, than the spirit and power

of godliness, &c. Shall I add, is it not that which greatly prevailed to bring down those judgments which at present we feel and groan under? I will dare to say, it was a cause thereof." (p. 116, 117.)

But, I say, wherein is the proposition offensive? Is it not a wicked thing to make bars to communion, where God hath made none? Is it not a wickedness, to make that a wall of division betwixt us, which God never commanded to be so? If it be not, justify your practice; if it be, take shame.

To conclude this; when you have proved that water-baptism (which you yourself have said is not a church-ordinance, p. 40,) is essential to church-communion, and that the church may, by the word of God, bolt, bar, and for ever shut out those, far better than ourselves, that have not, according to our notion, been baptized with water, then it will be time enough, to talk of ground for so doing. In the meantime I must take leave to tell you, there is not in all the Bible one syllable for such a practice, wherefore your great cry about your order is wordless, and therefore faithless, and is a mere human invention.

I come now to your Fourteen Arguments, and shall impartially consider them.

YOUR first argument to prove it lawful to reject the unbaptized saint, is, "Because the great commission of Christ, Matt. xxviii., from which all persons have their authority for their ministry, (if any authority at all) doth clearly direct the contrary. By that commission ministers are first to disciple, and then to baptize them so made

disciples, and afterwards to teach them to observe all that Christ commands them, as to other ordinances of worship. If ministers have no other authority to teach them other parts of gospel-worship, before they believe and are baptized; it may be strongly supposed, they are not to admit them to other ordinances before they have passed this first enjoined in the commission."

Ans. 1. That the ministers are to disciple and baptize, is granted. But that they are prohibited (by the commission, Matt. xxviii.) to teach the disciples other parts of gospel-worship, that have not light in baptism, remains for you to prove. Shall I add, this position is so absurd and void of truth, that none who have ever read of the love of Christ, the nature of faith, the end of the gospel, or of the reason of instituted worship, which is edification, with understanding, should so much as once imagine.

But where are they here forbidden to teach them other truths, before they be baptized? This text as fairly denieth to the unbaptized believer heaven and glory. Nay, our author in the midst of all his flutter about this xxviiith of Matthew, dare venture to gather no more therefrom, but that it may be strongly supposed. Behold therefore, gentle reader, the ground on which these brethren lay the stress of their separation from their fellows, is nothing else but a supposition, without warrant, screwed out of this blessed word of God. Strongly supposed! But may it not be as strongly supposed, that the presence and blessing of the Lord Jesus with his ministers, is laid upon the same ground also? For thus he concludes the text; *And lo! I am with you always,*

even to the end of the world. But would, I say, any man from these words conclude, that Christ Jesus hath here promised his presence only to them that after discipling, baptize those that are so made ; and that they that do not baptize, shall neither have his presence nor his blessing ? I say again, should any so conclude hence, would not all experience prove him void of truth ? The words therefore must be left by you, as you found them, they favour not at all your groundless supposition.

To conclude, these words have not laid baptism in the way to debar the saint from fellowship of his brethren, no more than to hinder his inheritance in life and glory. Mark reads it thus : *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* Mark xvi. 16. Letting baptism, which he mentioned in the promise, fall, when he came at the threatening.

God also doth thus with respect to his worship in the church, he commands all and every whit of his will to be done, but beareth with our coming short in this, and that, and the other duty. But let us go on.

Your second argument is,

“ That the order of Christ’s commission, as well as the matter therein contained to be observed, may easily be concluded, from God’s severity towards them that sought him not according to due order. 1 Chron. xv. 13. Was God so exact with his people then, that all things to a pin must be according to the pattern in the mount, Heb. vii. 16, and ix. 11, whose worship then comparatively, to the gospel, was but after the law of a carnal commandment ; and can it be supposed he should be so indifferent now to leave men to their own liberty, to time and place

his appointments, contrary to what he hath given an express rule for in his word as before? Ezek. xlv. 7, 9, 10. It was the Priest's sin formerly to bring the uncircumcised in heart and flesh into his house."

Ans. That there is no such order in that commission as you feign, I have proved. As for your far-fetched instance (1 Chron. xv.) it is quite besides your purpose. The express word was, that the Priest, not a cart, should bear the ark of God. Also they were not to touch it, and yet Uzza did. Exod. xxv. 14. 1 Chron. xv. 12—16. Numb. iv. 15. 1 Chron. xiii. Now if you can make that xxviiith of Matthew say, "Receive none that are not baptized first, or that Christ would have them of his, that are not yet baptized, kept ignorant of all other truths that respect church-communion: then you say something, else you do but raise a mist before the simple reader: but whoso listeth may hang on your sleeve.

As for the pins and tacks of the tabernacle, they were expressly commanded; and when you have proved by the word of God, that you ought to shut saints out of your communion for want of baptism, then you may begin more justly to make your parallel. How fitly you have urged Ezek. xlv. to insinuate that unbaptized believers are like the uncircumcised in heart and flesh, I leave it to all gospel-novices to consider.

Your third argument is,

"The practice of the first gospel-ministers with them that first trusted in Christ, discovers the truth of what I assert. Certainly, they that lived at the spring-head, or fountain of truth, and had the law of Christ's own mouth, knew the meaning of his commission better than we; but

their constant practice in conformity to that commission, all along the acts of the apostles, discovers that they never arrived to such a latitude as men plead for now-a-days. They that gladly received the word were baptized, and they, yea, they only, were received into the church."

Ans. How well you have proved what you have asserted is manifest by my answer to the two former arguments. I add, that the ministers, and servants of Jesus Christ in the first churches (for that you are to prove), were commanded to forbear to preach other truths to the unbaptized believers; or that they were to keep them out of the church: or that the apostles and first fathers have given you to understand by their example, that you ought to keep as good out of churches as yourselves, hath not yet been shewed by the authority of the word. The second of the Acts proveth not, that the three thousand were necessitated to be baptized in order to their fellowship with the church, neither doth it say they, yea, they only, were received into the church. But suppose all this, as much was done at the first institution of circumcision, &c. yet afterwards thousands were received without it.

Your fourth argument is,

"None of the scripture saints ever attempted this church-privilege without baptism, (if they did, let it be shewn.) The Eunuch first desired baptism before any thing else; Paul was first baptized before he did essay to join with the church. Our Lord Christ, the great example of the New Testament, entered not upon his public ministry, much less any other gospel ordinance of worship, till he was baptized."

Ans. That none of the scripture saints (if there be any unscripture ones) so much as attempted this church-privilege first, remains for you to prove. But suppose they were all baptized, because they had light therein, what then? Doth this prove that baptism is essential to church-communion? Or, that Christ commanded in the xxviiith of Matt. or gave his ministers by that authority, not to make known to believers other parts of gospel-worship, if they shall want light in baptism? The Eunuch, Paul, and our blessed Lord Jesus, did none of them, by their baptism, set themselves to us examples how to enter into church-communion. What church was the Eunuch baptized into, or made a member of; but where is it said, that the unbaptized believer, how excellent soever in faith and holiness, must, for want of water-baptism, be shut out from the communion of saints, or be debarred the privilege of his father's house? This you are to prove.

Your fifth argument is,

“ If Christ himself was made manifest to be the Sent of God by baptism, as appears, Mark i. 9, 10; then why may not baptism, as the first-fruits of faith, and the first step of gospel-obedience, as to instituted worship, be a manifesting, discovering ordinance upon others who thus follow Christ's steps.”

Ans. That Jesus Christ was manifested as the Sent of God by baptism, or that baptism is the first fruit of faith, and the first step of gospel-obedience, as to instituted worship, is both without proof and truth; the text saith not, he was manifest to be the Sent of God by baptism; nay, it saith not, that by that he was manifest to others

to be any thing : you have therefore but wronged the text to prove your wordless practice by. Yea, John himself, though he knew him before he was baptized, to be a man of God ; for, saith he, *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me*, and knew him after to be the Sent of God ; yet not in, or by, but after he was baptized, viz. by the descending of the Holy Ghost, after he was come out of the water, as he was in prayer ; for the heavens were opened to John, and he saw, and bare record, because he saw the Spirit descend from heaven, and abide upon Jesus, after his baptism, as he was in prayer. Matt. iii. 13—17. Luke iii. 21, 22. Thus we find him made known before, and after, but not at all by baptism, to be the Sent of God.

And that baptism is the fruits of faith, or that faith ought to be tied to take its first step in water-baptism, in the instituted worship of God (this you must prove), is not found expressed within the whole Bible. Faith acts according to its strength, and as it sees, it is not tied or bound to any outward circumstance ; one believeth he may, and another believeth he may not, either do this or that.

Your sixth argument is,

“ If baptism be in any sense any part of the foundation of a church, as to order, Heb. vi. 1, 2. it must have place here or no where : why are those things called first principles, if not first to be believed, and practised ? Why are they rendered by the learned the A, B, C, of a Christian, and the beginning of Christianity, milk for babes, if it be no matter whether baptism be practised or no ? If it be said water-baptism is not there intended,

let them shew me how many baptisms there are besides water-baptism. Can you build and leave out a stone in the foundation? I intend not baptism a foundation any other way, but in respect of order, and it is either intended for that or nothing.”

Ans. Baptism is in no sense the foundation of a church. I find no foundation of a church, but Jesus Christ himself. Matt. xvi. 18. 1 Cor. iii. 11. Yea, the foundation mentioned, Heb. vi. 1, 2. is nothing else but this very Christ. For he is the foundation, not only of the church, but of all that good that at any time is found in her. He is the foundation of our repentance, and of our faith towards God, verses 1, 2. Further, Baptisms are not here mentioned with respect to the act in water, but of the doctrine, that is, the signification thereof: the doctrine of baptisms. And observe, neither faith, nor repentance, nor baptisms, are called here foundations. Another thing for a foundation, is here by the Holy Ghost intended, even a foundation for them all; a foundation of faith, of repentance, of the doctrine of baptisms, of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this foundation is Jesus Christ himself, and these are the first principles, the milk, the A, B, C, and the beginning of Christian religion in the world.

I dare not say, No matter whether water-baptism be practised or no. But it is not a stone in the foundation of a church, no not respecting order; it is not to another, a sign of my sonship with God; it is not the door into fellowship with the saints; it is no church-ordinance, as you yourself have testified, p. 40. So then as to church-work, it hath no place at all therein.

Your seventh argument is,

“ If Paul knew the Galatians only upon the account of charity, no other ways to be the sons of God by faith, but by this part of their obedience, as he seems to import, then the same we may judge of the truth of men’s profession of faith, when it shews itself by this self-same obedience. Gal. iii. 26, 27. Baptism being an obligation to all following duties.”

Ans. This your argument, being builded upon no more than a seeming import, and having been above ten times overthrown already, I might leave still with you, till your seeming import is come to a real one, and both to a greater persuasion upon your own conscience. But verily Sir, you grossly abuse your reader. Must imports, yea, must seeming imports now stand for arguments, thereby to maintain your confident separation from your brethren? Yea, must such things as these, be the basis on which you build those heavy censures and condemnations you raise against your brethren, that cannot comply with you, because you want the word? A seeming import. But are these words of faith? or do the scriptures only help you to seeming imports, and me-hap-soes for your practice? No, nor yet to them neither, for I dare boldly affirm it, and demand if you can, to prove, that there is so much as a seeming import in all the word of God, that countenanceth your shutting men, better than ourselves, from the things and privileges of our father’s house.

That to the Galatians, saith not, that Paul knew them to be the sons of God by faith, no other way, but by this part of their obedience; but puts them upon concluding themselves the sons of God, if they were baptized into

the Lord Jesus, which could not (ordinarily) be known but unto themselves alone : because, being thus baptized, respecting a special act of faith, which only God, and him that hath, and acteth it, can be privy to. It is one thing for him that administereth, to baptize in the name of Jesus, another thing for him that is the subject, by that to be baptized into Jesus Christ. Baptizing into Christ, is rather the act of the faith of him that is baptized, than his going into water and coming out again : but that Paul knew this to be the state of the Galatians no other way, but by their external act of being baptized with water, is both wild and unsound, and a miserable import indeed.

Your eighth argument is,

“ If being baptized into Christ, be a putting on of Christ, as Paul expresses, then they have not put on Christ in that sense he means, that are not baptized ; if this putting on of Christ, doth not respect the visibility of Christianity ; assign something else as its signification ; great men’s servants are known by their master’s liveries, so are gospel-believers by this livery of water-baptism, that all that first trusted in Christ submitted unto, which is in itself as much an obligation to all gospel-obedience, as circumcision was to keep the whole law.”

Ans. For a reply to the first part of this argument, go back to the answer to the seventh.

Now that none have put on Christ in Paul’s sense ; yea, in a saving, in the best sense, but them that have, as you would have them, gone into water, will be hard for you to prove, yea, is ungodly for you to assert.

Your comparing water-baptism to a gentleman’s livery, by which his man is known to be his, is fantastical.

Go you but ten doors from where men have knowledge of you, and see how many of the world, or Christians, will know you by this goodly livery, to be one that hath put on Christ. What! known by water-baptism to be one that hath put on Christ, as a gentleman's man is known to be his master's servant, by the gay garment his master gave him. Away fond man, you do quite forget the text. *By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you love one another.* John xiii. 35.

That baptism is in itself obliging, to speak properly, it is false, for set it by itself, and it stands without the stamp of heaven upon it, and without its signification also: and how, as such, it should be obliging, I see not.

Where you insinuate, it comes in the room of, and obligeth as circumcision: You say, you know not what. Circumcision was the initiating ordinance, but this you have denied to baptism. Further, circumcision then bound men to the whole obedience of the law, when urged by the false apostles, and received by an erroneous conscience. Would you thus urge water-baptism! Would you have men to receive it with such consciences? Circumcision in the flesh, was a type of circumcision in the heart, and not of water-baptism.

Your ninth argument is,

“ If it were commendable in the Thessalonians, that they followed the footsteps of the church of Judea, 1 Thess. ii. 24. who it appears followed this order of adding baptized believers unto the church; then they that have found out another way of making church-members, are not by that rule praiseworthy, but rather to be blamed; it was not what was since in corrupted times, but that

which was from the beginning: the first churches were the purest pattern."

Ans. That the text saith there was a church of Judea, I find not, (1 Thess. ii. 14.) And that the Thessalonians are commended for refusing to have communion with the unbaptized believers (for that is our question), prove it by the word, and then you do something. Again, that the commendations (1 Thes. ii. 14) do chiefly, or at all, respect their being baptized: *or, because they followed the churches of God, which in Judea were in Christ Jesus*, in the example of water-baptism is quite beside the word. The verse runs thus: *For the brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus, for ye also who have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews, &c.* This text then commends them, not for that they were baptized with water, but, for that they stood their ground although baptized with suffering, like them in Judea, for the name of the Lord Jesus, *For suffering like things of their own countrymen, as they did of the Jews.* Will you not leave off to abuse the word of God, and forbear turning it out of its place, to maintain your unchristian practice of rejecting the people of God, and excluding them their blessed privileges?

The unbaptized believer, instead of taking shame for entering into fellowship without it, will be ready, I doubt, to put you to shame for bringing scriptures so much besides the purpose, and for stretching them so miserably to uphold you in your fancies.

Your tenth argument is,

"If so be, that any of the members at Corinth,

Galatia, Colosse, Rome, or them that Peter wrote to, were not baptized, then Paul's arguments for the resurrection to them, or to press them to holiness from that ground (Rom. vi. Col. ii. 1 Cor. xv.) was out of doors, and altogether needless, yea, it bespeaks his ignorance, and throweth contempt upon the Spirit's wisdom, (Heb. vi. 1 Pet. iii. 12,) by which he wrote; if that must be asserted as a ground to provoke them to such an end, which had no being; and if all the members of all those churches were baptized, why should any plead for an exemption from baptism, for any such member now?

Ans. Suppose all, if all these churches were baptized, what then? that answereth not our question. We ask where you find it written, that those that are baptized, should keep men as holy, and as much beloved of the Lord Jesus as themselves, out of church-communion, for want of light in water-baptism.

Why we plead for their admission, though they see not yet, that that is their duty, is because we are not forbidden, but commanded to receive them, because God and Christ hath done it, Rom. xiv. 15.

Your eleventh argument is,

“If unbaptized persons must be received into churches only, because they are believers, though they deny baptism; then why may not others plead for the like privilege, that are negligent in any other gospel-ordinance of worship, from the same ground of want of light let it be what it will. So then as the consequence of this principle, churches may be made up of visible sinners, instead of visible saints.”

Ans. I plead not for believers simply because they are

believers, but for such believers of whom we are persuaded by the word, that God hath received them.

2. There are some of the ordinances, that be they neglected, the being of a church, as to her visible gospel constitution, is taken quite away ; but baptism is none of them, it being no church-ordinance as such, nor any part of faith, nor of that holiness of heart, or life, that sheweth me to the church to be indeed a visible saint. The saint is a saint before, and may walk with God, and be faithful with the saints, and to his own light also, though he never be baptized. Therefore to plead for his admission, makes no way at all for the admission of the open profane, or to receive, as you profess you do, persons unprepared to the Lord's table, and other solemn appointments, p. 29.

Your twelfth argument is,

“ Why should professors have more light in breaking of bread, than baptism ? that this must be so urged for their excuse. Hath God been more sparing in making out his mind in the one, rather than the other ? Are there more precepts or precedents for the supper, than baptism ? Hath God been so bountiful in making out himself about the supper, that few or none that own ordinances scruple it ? And must baptism be such a rock of offence to professors, that few will inquire after it, or submit to it ? Hath not man's wisdom interposed to darken this part of God's counsel ? By which professors seem willingly led though against so many plain commands and examples, written as with a sunbeam, that he that runs may read. And must an advocate be entertained to plead for so gross

a piece of ignorance, that the meanest babes of the first gospel-times were never guilty of? ”

Ans. Many words to little purpose.

1. Must God be called to an account by you, why he giveth more light about the supper than baptism? May he not shew to, or conceal from this, or any other of his servants, which of his truths he pleaseth? Some of the members of Jerusalem had a greater truth than this kept from them, for ought I know, as long as they lived, (Acts xi. 19,) yet God was not called in question about it.

2. Breaking of bread, not baptism, being a church-ordinance, and that such also as must be often reiterated; yea, it being an ordinance so full of blessedness, as lively to present union and communion with Christ to all the members that worthily eat thereof; I say, the Lord's supper being such, that while the members sit at that feast, they shew to each other the death and blood of the Lord, as they ought to do, *till he comes*, (1 Cor. x. 15—17, and xi. 22—26,) the church as a church, is much more concerned in that, than in water-baptism, both as to her faith and comfort; both as to her union and communion.

3. Your supposition, That very few professors will seriously inquire after water-baptism, is too rude. What, must all the children of God, that are not baptized for want of light, be still stigmatized with want of serious inquiry after God's mind in it?

4. That I am an advocate, entertained to plead for so gross a piece of ignorance, as want of light in baptism, is but like the rest of your jumbling. I plead for communion with men, godly and faithful; I plead that

they may be received, that God hath shewed us he hath received, and commanded we should receive them.

Your thirteenth argument is,

“ If obedience must discover the truth of a man’s faith to others, why must baptism be shut out? as if it was no part of gospel obedience. Is there no precept for this practice, that it must be thus despised, as a matter of little use? Or shall one of Christ’s precious commands be blotted out of a Christian’s obedience, to make way for a church fellowship of man’s devising? ”

Ans. 1. This is but round, round, the same thing over and over. That my obedience to water, is not a discovery of my faith to others, is evident; from the body of the Bible we find nothing that affirms it.

And I will now add, that if a man cannot shew himself a Christian without water-baptism, “ He shall never shew either saint or sinner, that he is a Christian by it.”

2. Who they are that despise it, I know not; but that church-membership may be without it (seeing even you yourself have concluded it is no church ordinance, p. 40. not the entering-ordinance, (pp. 3, 4.) standeth both with scripture and reason, as mine arguments make manifest. So that all your arguments prove no more than this, “ That you are so wedded to your wordless notions, that charity can have no place with you.” Have you all this while so much as given me one small piece of a text to prove it unlawful for the church, to receive those whom she, by the word, perceiveth the Lord God and her Christ hath received? No: and therefore you have said so much as amounts to nothing.

Your last argument is,

“ If the baptism of John was so far honoured and dignified, that they that did submit to it, are said to justify God; and those that did it not, are said to reject his counsel against themselves: so that their receiving, or rejecting the whole doctrine of God, hath its denomination from this single practice. And is there not as much to be said of the baptism of Christ, unless you will say it is inferior to John’s in worth and use.”

Ans. 1. That our denomination of believers, and of our receiving the doctrine of the Lord Jesus, is not to be reckoned from our baptism, is evident; because according to our notion of it, they only that have before received the doctrine of the gospel, and so shew it us by their confession of faith, they only ought to be baptized. This might serve for an answer for all: But,

2. The baptism of John was *the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins*, of which water was but an outward signification, Mark i. 4. Now what is the baptism of repentance, but an unfeigned acknowledgment that they were sinners, and so stood in need of a Saviour, Jesus Christ. This baptism, or baptism under this notion, the Pharisees would not receive, *for they trusted to themselves that they were righteous, that they were not as other men, that they had need of no repentance*: Not but that they would have been baptized with water, might that have been without an acknowledgment that they were sinners; wherefore seeing the counsel of God respected rather the remission of sins by Jesus Christ, than the outward act of water-baptism, ye ought not, as you do, by this your reasoning, to make it rather, at least in the

revelation of it, to terminate in the outward act of being baptized, but in unfeigned and sound repentance, and the receiving Jesus Christ by faith.

Further, a desire to submit to John's water-baptism, or of being baptized by him in water, did not demonstrate by that single act, the receiving of the whole doctrine of God as you suggest.

Why did John reject the Pharisees that would have been baptized? and Paul examine them that were? Matt. iii. 7. Acts xix. 2, 3.

If your doctrine be true, why did they not rather say, Oh! seeing you desire to be baptized, and seeing you have been baptized, you need not to be questioned any further; your submitting to John's water, to us is a sufficient testimony, even that single act, that you have received the whole doctrine of God.

But I say, why did John call them vipers? And Paul asked them, Whether they had yet received the Holy Ghost? Yea, it is evident, that a man may be desirous of water, that a man may be baptized, and neither own the doctrine of repentance, not know on whom he should believe; evident, I say, and that by the same texts, Matt. iii. 7. Acts xix. 2—4.

You have grounded therefore this your last argument, as also the rest, upon an utter mistake of things.

I come now to your Questions; which although they be mixed with gall, I will with patience see if I can turn them into food.

Your first question is,

“ I ASK your own heart, whether popularity and

applause of variety of professors, be not in the bottom of what you have said ; that hath been your snare to pervert the right ways of the Lord, and to lead others into a path wherein we can find none of the footsteps of the flock in the first ages ? ”

Ans. Setting aside a retaliation, like your question, I say, and God knows I speak the truth, I have been tempted to do what I have done, by a provocation of sixteen years long ; tempted, I say, by the brethren of your way : who, whenever they saw their opportunity, have made it their business to seek, to rend us in pieces ; mine own self they have endeavoured to persuade to forsake the church ; some they have rent quite off from us, others they have attempted to divide and break off from us, but by the mercy of God, have been hitherto prevented.

A more large account you may have in my next, if you think good to demand it ; but I thank God that I have written what I have written.

Quest. 2. “ Have you dealt brotherly, or like a Christian, to throw so much dirt upon your brethren, in print, in the face of the world, when you had opportunity to converse with them of reputation amongst us, before printing, being allowed the liberty by them, at the same time for you to speak among them ? ”

Ans. I have thrown no dirt upon them, nor laid any thing to their charge, if their practice be warrantable by the word ; but you have not been offended at the dirt, yourselves have thrown at all the godly in the land that are not of your persuasion, in counting them unfit to be communicated with, or to be accompanied with in the

house of God. This dirt you never complained of, nor would, I doubt, to this day, might you be still let alone to throw it. As to my book, it was printed before I spake with any of you, or knew whether I might be accepted of you. As to them of reputation among you, I know others not one tittle inferior to them, and have my liberty to consult with whom I like best.

Quest. 3. "Doth your carriage answer the law of love or civility, when the brethren used means to send for you for a conference, and their letter was received by you, that you should go out again from the city after knowledge of their desires, and not vouchsafe a meeting with them, when the glory of God, and the vindication of so many churches is concerned?"

Ans. The reason why I came not amongst you, was partly because I consulted mine own weakness, and counted not myself, (being a dull-headed man), able to engage so many of the chief of you, as I was then informed intended to meet me : I also feared, in personal disputes, heats and bitter contentions might arise, a thing my spirit hath not pleasure in. I feared also, that both myself and words would be misrepresented, and that not without cause ; for if they that answer a book will alter, and screw arguments out of their places, and make my sentences stand in their own words, not mine, when (I say) my words are in a book to be seen. What would you have done, had I in the least, either in matter or manner, though but seemingly miscarried among you ?

As for the many churches which you say are concerned, as also the glory of God, I doubt not to say they are only your wordless opinions that are concerned ; the

glory of God is vindicated : *We receive him that God hath received, and that to the glory of God*, Rom. xv. 16.

Quest. 4 “ Is it not the spirit of Diotrephes of old, in you, who loved to have the pre-eminence, that you are so bold to keep out all the brethren, that are not of your mind in this matter, from having any entertainment in the churches or meetings to which you belong, though you yourself have not been denied the like liberty, among them that are contrary-minded to you ? Is this the way of your retaliation ? Or are you afraid lest the truth should invade your quarters ? ”

Ans. I can say, I would not have the spirit you talk of, what I have of it, God take it from me. But what was the spirit of Diotrephes ? Why, not to receive the brethren into the church, and to forbid them that would. (3 John 9, 10) This do not I ; I am for communion with saints, because they are saints ; I shut none of the brethren out of the churches, nor forbid them that would receive them. I say again, shew me the man that is a visible believer, and that walketh with God, and though he differ with me about baptism, the doors of the church stand open for him, and all our heaven-born privileges he shall be admitted to them. But how came Diotrephes so lately into our parts ? Where was he in those days that our brethren of the baptized way, would neither receive into the church, nor pray with men as good as themselves, because they were not baptized ; but would either, like Quakers, stand with their hats on their heads, or else withdraw till we had done.

As to our not suffering those you plead for to preach in our assemblies, the reason is, because we cannot yet

prevail with them, to repent of their church-renting principles. As to the retaliation, mind the hand of God, and remember Adoni-bezek, Judges i. 7.

Let the truth come into our quarters and welcome, but sowers of discord, because the Lord hates it, we also ourselves will avoid them.

Quest. 5. "Is there no contempt cast upon the brethren who desired your satisfaction, that at the same time when you had opportunity to speak to them, instead of that, you committed the letters to others, by way of reflection upon them?"

Ans. It is no contempt at all to consult men more wise and judicious than him that wrote, or myself either. But why not consult with others? Is wisdom to die with you? Or do you count all that yourselves have no hand in, done to your disparagement?

Quest. 6. "Did not your presumption prompt you to provoke them to printing, in your letter to them, when they desired to be found in no such practice, lest the enemies of truth should take advantage by it?"

Ans. What provoked you to print, will be best known at the day of Judgment, whether your fear of losing your wordless opinion, or my plain answer to your letter. The words in my letter are, "As for my book, never defer its answer till you speak with me, for I strive not for mastery but truth." Though you did not desire to write, yet with us there was continual labour to rend us to pieces, and to prevent that which was in my first book written. And let who will take advantage, so the truth of God, and the edification of my brother be promoted.

Quest. 7. "Whether your principle and practice is

not equally against others as well as us, viz. Episcopal, Presbyterians, and Independents, who are also of our side, for our practice, though they differ with us about the subject of baptism. Do you delight to have your hand against every man?"

Ans. I own water-baptism to be God's ordinance, but I make no idol of it. Where you call now the Episcopal to side with you, and also the Presbyterian, &c. you will not find them easily persuaded to conclude with you against me. They are against your manner of dipping, as well as the subject of water-baptism; neither do you, for all you flatter them, agree together in all but the subject. Do you allow their sprinkling? Do you allow their signing with the cross? Why then have you so stoutly, an hundred times over, condemned these things as antichristian? I am not against every man, though by your abusive language you would set every one against me; but I am for union, concord, and communion of saints, as saints, and for that cause I wrote my book.

To conclude,

1. In all I have said, I put a difference between my brethren of the baptized way: I know some are more moderate than some.

2. When I plead for the unbaptized, I chiefly intend those that are not so baptized as my brethren judge right, according to the first pattern.

3. If any shall count my papers worth the scribbling against, let him deal with mine arguments, and things immediately depending upon them, and not conclude he hath confuted a book, when he hath only quarrelled at words.

4. I have done when I have told you, that I strive not for mastery, nor to shew myself singular ; but if it might be, for union and communion among the godly. And count me not as an enemy because I tell you the truth.

5. And now, dissenting brethren, I commend you to God, who can pardon your sin, and give you more grace, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Eighteen evils arising from the exclusion of Christians from church-communion, and the privileges thereof, for the want of adult water-baptism, which God never made a wall of division between them.—Extracted from Bunyan's "Reason of my Practice in Worship."

1. It looks too like a spirit of persecution. Job xix. 25—29.

2. It respecteth more a form, than the spirit and power of godliness. 2 Tim. iii. 5.

3. This is to make laws where God hath made none, and to be wise above what is written ; contrary to God's word, and our own principles.

4. It is a directing of the Spirit of God.

5. It bindeth all men's faith and light to mine opinion.

6. It taketh away the children's bread.

7. It withholdeth from them the increase of faith.

8. It tendeth to harden the hearts of the wicked.

9. It tendeth to make wicked the hearts of weak Christians.

10. It setteth open a door to all temptations.
11. It tempteth the devil to fall upon those that are alone, and have none to help them.
12. It is the nursery of all vain janglings, backbitings, and strangeness among the Christians.
13. It occasioneth the world to reproach us.
14. It holdeth staggering consciences in doubt of the right way of the Lord.
15. It giveth occasion to many to turn aside to most dangerous heresies.
16. It abuseth the holy scriptures ; it wresteth God's ordinances out of their place.
17. It is a prop to Antichrist.
18. Shall I add, is it not that which greatly prevailed to bring down those judgments which at present we feel, and groan under ? I will dare to say it was the cause thereof.

THE END.

